



ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION THROUGH GOVERNMENT INFORMATION LOCATOR SERVICES

As technology continues to leverage human effort in new, exciting, and productive ways, citizens increasingly look to their governments for additional information, services, and assistance in accessing government information. This complex set of services requires expertise in the structure and nature of information, hardware and software applications, and the dynamics of public service. Access to government information is most effective when government officials with these specialties join forces. In recognition of this desired collaboration, the membership of Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), National Association of State Information Resources Executives (NASIRE), and National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA) formally express their desire to collaborate in ways that make best use of their talents and skills, to insure broad and effective electronic access to government information.

As part of achieving this goal, we jointly recognize that:

1. Public electronic access to government information is a priority to which governments must commit. Government agencies must cooperatively pursue opportunities to increase and enhance public electronic access to information. Government information locator services are an effective approach to connecting people with their governments. For such an effort to succeed requires standards in content description, hardware and software, and the life cycle of information. The most successful programs proceed when professionals in those areas work closely together to deploy a superior product.
2. Successful access requires the application of the specialized and complementary disciplines and skills of library science (content management), technology (equipment and software management), and archives and records management (information life cycle). Partnerships among these disciplines are vital.
 - State library agencies have a role in assisting agencies to publish, inventory, and index public information. They lead in the dissemination of government information through indexing, abstracting, and research services and training the public in the use of technology. Their expertise in direct public service is critical in the design of projects, services, and software applications.
 - Central information technology agencies have a role in determining or designing the hardware and software applications that most effectively connect citizens with information. They exert leadership in determining software and hardware standards and in helping train agency personnel in the application of technology to agency operations and services.
 - Archives and records management agencies have a role in managing government information through its life cycle. They lead in setting information management standards, assisting agencies in information management, and training agency personnel in information management.

Given the principles above, we jointly conclude that:

1. States should pursue government information locator services within a fully collaborative partnership among state library agencies, information resource agencies, and state archives/records management agencies.
2. State librarians, chief information officers, and archivists should work together to develop indexing standards and controlled vocabularies. Such efforts will maximize interoperability among government information locator services systems and enhance wider discovery of information by citizens.

--Adopted by COSLA — October 1999
--Adopted by NASIRE — January 2000
--Adopted by NAGARA — January 2000

